

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Community Center, Community Room
10 South Eagleville Road**

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Peter Millman, Ruth Moynihan, Betsy Paterson, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Presenters: Tim Andre and Norm Goldman (Desman Associates) and Sam Gardner (Gregg Wies & Gardner Architects)

*There were several transportation stakeholders who were invited that attended the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:09 pm.

2. Public Comment

David Friedmann expressed concern about whether the UConn bus system would serve the intermodal center as he assumes that many of the customers will be students. He said the UConn system seems to converge at the UConn Co-op. The Peter Pan bus also now stops at the UConn Co-op. Will the intermodal center be in competition with the UConn bus routes? Will the UConn students be underserved if the bus system does not stop at the UConn Co-op?

Janet Freniere, UConn Manager of Transportation Services, said the Partnership has been keeping UConn in the loop on proposed transit plans. She said the intention by UConn is to route buses to the intermodal center, while maintaining stops outside the Co-op. It is envisioned that the Peter Pan bus will stop at both the Co-op and the intermodal center.

Ms. Freniere said that the Megabus system will now be serving the UConn campus with direct service to Hartford and New York City. The bus will depart from the Co-op but plans are for it to depart from the intermodal center in the future.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2011.

Betsy Paterson moved to approve the Minutes from January 25, 2011 as presented.

Frank McNabb seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Review and Discussion of Schematic Design for Parking Garage, Intermodal Center, and Village Street

Mr. Bacon introduced Sam Gardner from Gregg Wies & Gardner (GWG) Architects, and Norm Goldman and Tim Andre from Desman Associates.

Mr. Gardner gave a Power Point presentation. He said the intermodal center is funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

He said a variety of stakeholders have been identified including surrounding neighborhood groups.

Mr. Gardner said the team from GWG is using the Storrs Center design, and sustainability guidelines as their guide for development of the intermodal center.

He said that the facility will be a “green” facility and will meet CT Energy Code.

Mr. Gardner said the goal is for the intermodal center to serve as a central, landmark facility for Mansfield.

Mr. Gardner said since the budget for the intermodal center is fixed, the team is looking at taking advantage of surrounding adjacent spaces such as the garage for car sharing space.

Pene Williams asked if people can rent a car at the intermodal center, and Mr. Gardner replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Gardner said the transit pathway will be Village Street with the road and the intermodal center serving as one seamless transportation system.

He said there will be an opportunity for plazas along the sidewalks along Village Street.

Mr. Gardner said one idea is for bikers to have a facility as part of the project, with showers and bathrooms. The goal is to be able to rent bikes as well.

He said the Beta Group, which is a member of their team, will be working with the transit providers to obtain levels of service and evaluate their demands.

Mr. Gardner said the intermodal facility is being planned to include interactive information kiosks.

Mr. Gardner showed some early schematic designs for the intermodal center which is proposed to be located on the southeast end of the garage. It is proposed to be two stories.

Mr. Gardner said that elevators will connect to the intermodal center and all levels of the garage.

He said there has been discussion of a bike club on the 2nd floor where bikers will have access to lockers and storage.

The public space in front of the intermodal center is proposed to have seating and bus canopies. Signage and the interactive kiosks would be located in that area.

He said one of the goals would be for someone with a smart phone to access scheduling and ticketing information from the kiosk.

In response to a question from Ms. Williams, Mr. Gardner said the intermodal center will not be a mixed-use building.

Peter Millman asked about who comprises the bike riders. Mr. Gardner said the UConn community is expected to make up a good part of the users as well as Storrs Center residents and employees.

Lon Hultgren, Mansfield Director of Public Works, said he sees the commuters as employees – people who bike in and use the bus to get to work. Mr. Hultgren said he wants all modes of transportation to “shake hands” and for the intermodal center to be more than a waiting room. He said one possibility is for a bike operator to operate the intermodal center. Mr. Hultgren said the goal is to find creative ways to staff the intermodal center. He said there was a concern about the public restrooms being unattended so it was important to find a way to staff the restrooms.

Mr. Millman said his concern is that most people at UConn would bike directly to work rather than to the intermodal center.

Lynn Stoddard asked if the intermodal center would provide bus service to people such as her who commute to Hartford. She currently drives to Coventry and takes the bus from there to Hartford. Mr. Hultgren said this has been discussed, but parking spaces will be limited in the garage so this constituency will likely not be a main user at least initially.

Manny Haidous asked about the space for the buses to queue. Mr. Hultgren said that there are two spaces for the buses to pull up to get passengers and potentially room for two buses to queue.

Norm Goldman said he has been working on Storrs Center for some time. Desman Associates competed for the design work on the garage and was chosen by the Town to do this work. He referred to preliminary plans at the front of the room.

Mr. Goldman said that the garage will not be visible from Storrs Road because the TS-2 mixed-use building will be in front of it. He said the garage will have shared footings with the TS-2 building and the intermodal center.

Mr. Goldman said the vehicular entrances to the garage will be off the rear of the building. Pedestrians will enter through the intermodal center. This will help alleviate traffic/pedestrian conflicts.

He said an additional level is an add-alternate.

There will be separate entry and exit lanes.

Shared cars and electric charging stations will be located on the 1st floor.

Residential parking will be located starting on the 2nd level where those parkers will also enter. A device placed on the dashboard of the car will be able to read if one is a residential parker. If one of the residents does not “nest”, they will be billed for the cost of parking.

The lower level will include parking for transient and commercial parkers. There will not be a dead-end point.

The elevators will be enclosed in glass which will help with safety.

The garage will be an open structure all along the east side, north side and part of the south side which will allow air to filter through the facility.

Mr. Goldman and Tim Andre said they are still working on design elements which they want to coordinate with the intermodal center.

Mr. Andre said that cost savings has been achieved as the same estimator, and code consultant is being used for the mixed-use buildings, parking garage, and intermodal center.

Mr. Goldman said the garage will be a 24/7 operation but gates will not allow people to enter the garage after a certain time.

Mr. Goldman said there will be a pay station for entry and exit so no cashier will be needed. A user will be able to use a credit card and cash.

Mr. Goldman said that a parking office is proposed for when/if there is financing available to manage the garage.

Every floor will be colored and numbered as will the elevators.

Ruth Moynihan asked if there are stairways. Mr. Goldman replied in the affirmative and said that the stairs are near the elevators and near Dog Lane, and will be open.

Mr. Goldman said a lighting system is planned that will dim when no activity but a motion sensor will light up the area when a person enters or exits.

Ms. Williams expressed her interest in having a person that would be able to assist her if she has questions about the garage or intermodal center. Mr. Gardner said the proposal is for the intermodal center to have a help desk but it is unclear how often it would be staffed.

Mr. McNabb asked if residents will be guaranteed their parking spot. Mr. Goldman said it will be assigned in the nesting area. To the extent possible, the space will correspond to the floor that one lives on so access is directly from the garage to the residential units. He said residents will have a card that only allows them to access the residential units from the garage.

Ms. Moynihan asked if a resident has to buy a space in the garage. Macon Toledano said that the residential developer EDR has committed to the Town a certain number of spaces that would be leased by residents. It may be possible to sublet a space.

Chris Kueffner asked if there is access to the residential area through the intermodal center. Mr. Goldman said there is no access.

Manny Haidous asked how to deal with snow removal? Mr. Goldman said for the future, they are looking at a PVC system on the roof of the garage that would help with the snow melting.

Mr. Millman emphasized the importance of good lighting and noted that it can make the difference between someone coming back to the downtown or not if the lighting is poor. Mr. Andre and Mr. Goldman agreed and it is their design challenge to make sure lighting is bright; it is not the place to try to save money. Mr. Hultgren asked if a light paint would help with ambient lighting.

Mr. Millman asked if five bays for car sharing are enough. Mr. Goldman said additional cars could be put in other areas if warranted.

Paul Aho asked if the garage noise will affect the living spaces. Mr. Goldman said that none of the walls will be the same, just the footings.

Alex Roe noted the importance of security for personal safety. Mr. Goldman said there will be blue light stations, two on each floor. There will be an intercom with each blue light station. He also said there will be TV monitors to watch activity. It has not been determined yet if the garage will be patrolled. Mr. Gardner noted that the intermodal center lobby is proposed to have glass walls so there will be visual access to see inside. Ms. Roe agreed with Mr. Hultgren that light paint is a good idea.

Mr. Bacon asked about the role of an estimator. Mr. Goldman said an estimator looks at the base cost of a job and makes sure that it is within budget.

Mr. Bacon asked, given the current economy, if garages are being constructed. Mr. Goldman said that Desman is building garages at Hartford Hospital, Danbury Hospital, in NYC and Albany, Norwich intermodal center, and at UMass Medical Center.

Mr. Gardner said with bids low, it is especially important to get bids on any add alternates.

Mr. Goldman said 40 to 50 percent of the cost of a garage is the structure. He said the cost of a garage was \$38 a square foot, went down to \$24 a square foot, and is back up to \$28 a square foot. Now is a good time to order a precast structure.

Greg Frantz asked how many spaces will there be for transient parkers. Mr. Andre and Mr. Goldman said the estimate is 244 for transient parkers and 300 for residential users. This does not include the extra deck.

Mr. Millman asked what would solar panels power? Mr. Goldman said it could power some of the parking services and the intermodal center office. Mr. Hultgren said there is currently no money for solar panels but wanted the structure in place if this becomes possible in the future.

5. Topics for Next Meeting and Set Meeting Date

Ms. van Zelm noted that the next meeting would include continued discussion of the garage, intermodal center, and Village Street design. She said the goal is to submit the zoning permits for the garage and the intermodal center to the Town in approximately two months. She suggested that the Committee meet again on March 15 at 5 pm.

6. Adjourn

Ms. Paterson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kueffner seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm